AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for distributing [[a]] signals in a stackable unit, comprising:

a first input connector of two or more input connectors;

a second input connector of the two or more input connectors, wherein the first input connector is laterally spaced apart from the second input connector, and the first input connector has a particular spatial relationship to the second input connector;

a first output connector of two or more output connectors;

a second output connector of the two or more output connectors, wherein the first output connector is laterally spaced apart from the second output connector, and the first output connector has the same particular spatial relationship to the second output connector;

wherein the two or more input connectors are disposed on a bottom plane of the stackable unit and the two or more output connectors are disposed on a top plane of the stackable unit, wherein the bottom plane and the top plane are vertically spaced apart;

means for communicatively coupling the first input connector and the second output connector;

wherein the first output connector is aligned substantially vertically with the first input connector and the second output connector is aligned substantially vertically with the second input connector, but the second output connector is not aligned substantially vertically with the first input connector; and

means for terminating the first output connector.

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable hub, wherein the two or more output connectors and the two or more input connectors are USB connectors, and wherein each of the two or more ~~output~~ input connectors is disposed in a foot of the stackable hub and each of the two or more

~~input~~ output connectors is disposed in a top portion of the stackable hub in a position substantially above a particular input connector of the two or more input connectors.

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable expansion module for network attached storage; the two or more output connectors and the two or more input connectors are USB connectors; and each of the two or more ~~output~~ input connectors is disposed in a foot of the stackable expansion module and each of the two or more ~~input~~ output connectors is disposed in a top portion of the stackable expansion module in a position substantially above a particular input connector of the two or more input connectors.

4. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the two or more output connectors comprise three or more output connectors; and wherein the apparatus further comprises a means for terminating a third output connector of the three or more output connectors, wherein the third output connector is spaced apart from both the first output connector and the second output connector.

5. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein an aggregate input connector comprises the two or more input connectors; and an aggregate output connector comprises the two or more output connectors.

6. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the two or more input connectors are provided as two or more separate connectors and the two or more output connectors are provided as two or more separate connectors.

7. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the two or more input connectors is located at one extreme of the apparatus and at least one of the two or more output connectors is located at a corresponding extreme on an opposite portion of the apparatus.

8. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable audio component, each of the two or more input connectors is capable of receiving an audio signal.

9. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable video component, each of the two or more input connectors is capable of receiving a video signal.

10. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein each connector of the two or more input connectors and each connector of the two or more output connectors is capable of transmitting power and the second output connector is terminated by providing no power over the second output connector.

11. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a stackable recording device and each connector of the two or more input connectors and each connector of the two or more output connectors is capable of transmitting a recordable signal and the means for terminating the second output connector comprises a means for transmitting a particular signal that indicates that the recordable signal is not being transmitted over the second output connector.

12. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the second input connector of the two or more input connectors carries a particular signal, wherein the particular signal is a terminating signal and the apparatus further comprises a means for detecting the terminating signal.

13. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein each connector of the two or more input connectors and each connector of the two or more output connectors is capable of transmitting two or more signals.

14. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the stackable unit is a microchip and wherein each connector of the two or more input connectors and each connector of the two or more output connectors comprises one or more pins on the microchip.

15. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein each connector of the two or more input connectors and each connector of the two or more output connectors is capable of transmitting a clock signal; and the means for terminating the second output connector comprises sending a signal other than the clock signal over the second output connector.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~An apparatus for distributing a signal in a stackable device~~ The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising:

means for providing a first ~~output~~ signal ~~to a first~~ through the stackable unit through ~~a first~~ the second output connector ~~of two or more output connectors~~ to a plurality of stackable units that are disposed above the stackable unit, wherein the two or more output connectors comprise three or more output connectors;

means for providing a second ~~output~~ signal ~~to~~ through the ~~first~~ stackable unit through a ~~second~~ third output connector of the two or more output connectors~~, wherein the first output connector is spaced apart from the second output connector~~ to the plurality of stackable units; and

means for determining which signal is provided to a particular unit of the plurality of stackable units by determining through which output connector a particular signal is being provided.

17. (Currently Amended) A method of distributing [[a]] signals in a stackable unit, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a first input connector of two or more input connectors;

providing a second input connector of the two or more input connectors, wherein the first input connector is laterally spaced apart from the second input connector,

and the first input connector has a particular spatial relationship to the second input connector;

providing a first output connector of two or more output connectors;

providing a second output connector of the two or more output connectors, wherein the first output connector is laterally spaced apart from the second output connector, and the first output connector has the same particular spatial relationship to the second output connector;

wherein the two or more input connectors are disposed on a bottom plane of the stackable unit and the two or more output connectors are disposed on a top plane of the stackable unit, wherein the bottom plane and the top plane are vertically spaced apart;

communicatively coupling the first input connector and the second output connector;

wherein the first output connector is aligned substantially vertically with the first input connector and the second output connector is aligned substantially vertically with the second input connector, but the second output connector is not aligned substantially vertically with the first input connector; and

terminating the first output connector.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~A method of distributing a signal in a stackable unit, the method~~ The method of Claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

providing a first ~~output~~ signal ~~to a first~~ through the stackable unit through ~~a first~~ the second output connector ~~of two or more output connectors~~ to a plurality of stackable units that are disposed above the stackable unit, wherein the two or more output connectors comprise three or more output connectors;

providing a second ~~output~~ signal ~~to~~ through the ~~first~~ stackable unit through a ~~second~~ third output connector of the two or more output connectors~~, wherein the first output connector is spaced apart from the second output connector~~ to the plurality of stackable units; and

determining which signal is provided to a particular unit of the plurality of stackable units by determining through which output connector a particular signal is being provided.

19. (New) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein a first signal carried by the first input connector is transmitted through the second output connector for consumption by a different stackable unit, and wherein a second signal carried by the second input connector is consumed by the stackable unit.

20. (New) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the number of the two or more input connectors determines the maximum number of stackable units to which the stackable unit is capable of distributing signals.

21. (New) An apparatus for distributing signals in a stackable unit, comprising:
a first input connector of four or more input connectors, wherein the first input connector is disposed in a first foot of the stackable unit;
a second input connector of the four or more input connectors, wherein the second input connector is disposed in a second foot of the stackable unit;
a third input connector of the four or more input connectors, wherein the third input connector is disposed in a third foot of the stackable unit;
a fourth input connector of the four or more input connectors, wherein the fourth input connector is disposed in a fourth foot of the stackable unit;
wherein the first input connector, the second input connector, the third input connector, and the fourth input connector are laterally spaced apart from each other;
a first output connector of four or more output connectors, wherein the first output connector is disposed in a top portion of the stackable unit and is aligned substantially vertically with the first input connector;
a second output connector of the four or more output connectors, wherein the second output connector is disposed in the top portion of the stackable unit and is aligned substantially vertically with the second input connector;
a third output connector of the four or more output connectors, wherein the third output connector is disposed in the top portion of the stackable unit and is aligned substantially vertically with the third input connector;

a fourth output connector of the four or more output connectors, wherein the fourth output connector is disposed in the top portion of the stackable unit and is aligned substantially vertically with the fourth input connector;

a first communication link that couples the first output connector and the second input connector, wherein the first output connector is not aligned substantially vertically with the second input connector;

a second communication link that couples the second output connector and the third input connector, wherein the second output connector is not aligned substantially vertically with the third input connector;

a third communication link that couples the third output connector and the fourth input connector, wherein the third output connector is not aligned substantially vertically with the fourth input connector;

wherein a signal carried by the first input connector is consumed by the stackable unit; and

wherein the fourth output connector is electrically terminated.